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palm-leaves. It is not without significance that in the lines immediately preceding those quoted above, Langland has been discussing the life of St. Paul the Hermit.

SAMUEL B. HEMINGWAY.

Yale College.

SPENSER'S VISIT TO THE NORTH OF ENGLAND

Between the poet Spenser's taking his master's degree at Cambridge in 1576 and his known secretaryship under the Bishop of Rochester in 1578 there is an interval which no biographer has been able to fill otherwise than conjecturally. The popular explanation of scholarly tradition would have it that he spent at least a part of this interval with relatives in the north of England,—an eighteenth century *obiter dictum* with no other apparent foundation than a gloss to the June eclogue of *The Shepheardes Calendar*. There "E. K." explains that Spenser's phrase "Forsake the soyle" alludes to the poet's private affairs, who "for his more preferment remouing out of the Northparts came into the South . . ." The relatives—*desunt*.

It is uncertain just how much credence we should attach to "E. K." at this point. There is here, as elsewhere (January gloss to *Colin Cloute*) in the *Calendar*, the appearance of an implied parallel to Virgil, who left Mantua in the north of Italy to go to Rome. Spenser similarly journeyed southward to Kent and London, and for the sake of the parallel he may well have stretched the "Northparts" to include Cambridgeshire. If "E. K." be not here the poet or the poet's mouthpiece, he may even misrepresent Spenser, for the lines contain no certain indication that such was his meaning. Indeed, they provide evidence to the contrary. Hobbinoll (*i. e.*, Harvey) a few lines later says: "Leave me those hilles . . . And to the dales resort." Now, in the *Calendar*, especially in the succeeding eclogue, hills stand for places of high honor, and the plains for the post of humble virtue. Consequently, to leave the hills would be to abandon ambition. The invitation of Harvey would be a poetical plea in favor of the country life. And such a sense would be more apt at publication in 1579 than allusion (strangely forced) to an event at least two years old.

Apart from this very equivocal evidence, it has been urged that Spenser's family was of Lancashire. Certain editors and writers of monographs, indeed, have continued to repeat the statement uncritically since it was controverted (*Anglia*, xxxi, 72 ff., "Spenser's Rosalind"). Without recapitulating the argument, it should suffice to correct finally Grosart's misuse of Harvey's Letterbook. This is his sole telling argument. He quotes (*Spenser*, i, lv) from what purports to be a letter by Harvey to Spenser:

"To be shorte, I woulde to God that all the ill-favorid cōpyes of my nowe prostituted devises were buried a greate deale deeper in the centre of the

erthe then the height and altitude of the middle region of the verye English Alpes amountes unto in your shier."

Grosart finds in this passage concerning the "English" Alps an allusion to Pendle Hill, and thereby establishes his conclusion that "your shier" (*i. e.*, Spenser's shire) is no other than Lancashire. He notes that the editor of Harvey, in his introduction, makes the passage read "in the aier," but, without consulting the manuscript, dismisses the unfavorable reading as a "grotesque mistake." But it is not a mistake. The manuscript (B. M., Sloane 93, fol. 37) was very faultily printed, as G. C. Moore Smith long since pointed out in *Notes and Queries*, varying here in several particulars. According to my collation the manuscript reads:

" . . . a greate deale deeper in ye Center of ye Erthe then ye height and altitude of ye very heighest Alpes amountes unto in ye middle region of ye Aier."

The "English" Alps prove to have been a delusion.

One further possible indication of a visit to the North of England has been sought in Spenser's use of northern dialect in the *Calendrar*. Certainly, there were northern men in London, Spenser's printer among them; and there were northern men at Cambridge during his seven years' residence at the university. But the poet's knowledge of northern dialect is amply accounted for in his boyhood by the circumstance that he attended the Merchant Taylors' School. The dialect was there impressed upon him by its use on the part of the school ushers. In his *History of the Merchant Taylors' School* (p. 25), Wilson notes that their use of northern English was regarded as objectionable. At the first visitation, on Friday, August 16, 1562, the examiners were well pleased. "The ushers had this only fault, that, being northern men born, they had not taught the children to speak distinctly, or to pronounce their words so well as they ought." For Spenser's excursions into dialect study we need not posit a visit to the North of England—nor, indeed, for any other reason.

PERCY W. LONG.

Harvard University.

BRIEF MENTION

On the Art of Writing, by Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch (Cambridge, University Press; New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1916). The American teacher would be led by the title of this book to look for a text-book, to be added to the unnumbered class-room manuals produced in hot haste to meet the demands of the enormously increased attention the colleges have come to bestow on the subject of English Composition. It is, however, not a text-book or methodical treatise, nor is it addressed to American students. There is a double advantage in this. The reader will be assisted in deepening his convic-